

The Ryan budget, lauded by Republicans, would replace Medicare with an inefficient voucher plan and increase the out-of-pocket costs of Maryland seniors by more than \$6,800 in the first year alone. And while they charge the health reform bill cut Medicare, Republicans fail to admit that they adopted in their plan the same \$500 billion in "cuts"—actually cost savings—included in the health care reform law.

So I stand with my colleagues to assure seniors that we'll protect Medicare today and in the future. And to all of those seniors I visited this morning, Happy Valentine's Day.

#### SUGAR REFORM

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, today, on Valentine's Day, millions of Americans will celebrate with a box of chocolates or candy. All told, consumers are expected to spend more than \$1.5 billion on candy this holiday.

What they don't know is that government sugar controls are making that heart-shaped box more expensive than it needs to be. What they don't know is that American companies are struggling to compete against foreign producers who pay half as much for sugar.

Because of government price supports, marketing allotments, and import quotas, U.S. consumers and businesses pay almost double the average world market price for sugar. By some estimates, this could be costing us more than 20,000 jobs. Many of us have watched good jobs lost because the government guarantees the profits of a relatively small group of growers and producers.

Reforming our sugar program isn't a partisan issue, which is why I've been proud to introduce H.R. 1385, the Free Market Sugar Act, with my friend from Chicago, DANNY DAVIS.

Maybe next Valentine's Day can be sweeter for American workers and consumers.

#### CONTINUED ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE FOR OUR SENIORS

(Mr. CARSON of Indiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, in 2010, the Affordable Care Act delivered a \$250 check to seniors in my district who were struggling to cover the gap between the cost of their prescription drugs and their Medicare coverage. In 2011, these same seniors benefited from an average savings of \$648 on their medications.

For my well-meaning Republican colleagues who say health reform is hurting Medicare beneficiaries, I ask them to imagine spending two and three times that amount on prescription drugs per month.

For most seniors, \$648 is a significant savings. And it is just the beginning.

The Affordable Care Act will provide more efficient care by bundling Medicare services, investing in our health care workforce, and focusing on quality.

Replacing Medicare with vouchers would erase the progress we have already made toward prescription drug coverage and lead to fewer choices for beneficiaries.

I encourage my colleagues to work with me on solutions that guarantee continued access to health care for our seniors.

#### CELEBRATING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE HOMECOMING OF CONGRESSMAN SAM JOHNSON

(Mr. BURGESS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, today I want to acknowledge a colleague, a fellow Texan, a veteran, and a true American hero. Congressman SAM JOHNSON served in the United States Air Force for 29 years. During service, he flew in 62 combat missions in the Korean war and 25 missions in the Vietnam war. While flying in his 25th Vietnam combat mission, Congressman JOHNSON was shot down and captured in North Vietnam.

On February 12, 1973, after 7 years of imprisonment, Congressman JOHNSON was returned to the United States and reunited with his wife and daughters. This week, we honor Congressman JOHNSON and we celebrate the 39th anniversary of his homecoming. Through the years of agony, he persevered, and he left Vietnam with the resolution to support every man and every woman fighting for the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, we are all called to office for different reasons. For Members of my class 10 years ago, it was the tragic events of September 11. For Congressman JOHNSON, it was his imprisonment that empowered him to run for office.

It is an honor to celebrate a man who has given not only part of his life to protect our freedoms, but a man who continues to represent the American people with dignity and respect. Thank you, Congressman JOHNSON, for your service to our Nation.

#### COMMENDING THE PRESIDENT'S PLAN TO HELP RESPONSIBLE HOMEOWNERS REFINANCE THEIR HOMES

(Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, the housing crisis plunged our economy into a recession that we are still struggling to overcome. Homeownership is at the heart of the American Dream, and yet over 10 million American families now owe more on their home than

what it's worth. President Obama recently announced a plan that would give homeowners the chance to save hundreds monthly and approximately \$3,000 yearly on their mortgages by refinancing at historically low interest rates.

Under President Obama's plan, the administration would also expand the eligibility for the Home Affordable Modification Program to borrowers with higher debt loads. It would also triple incentives paid to banks to reduce principal on loans and to help borrowers rebuild equity. In addition to these proposals, the administration is also extending HAMP to December 2013 to help responsible homeowners lower their costs and stay in their homes.

Mr. Speaker, I thank President Obama for his proposal that will provide much-needed relief for millions of American families. And I thank the President for his leadership and his commitment to helping American families move forward.

#### CAMERAS IN THE SUPREME COURT

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court will soon take up the President's nationalized health care law. This case will go down in history as it affects every American. But unless every citizen has a seat inside the Supreme Court, they will not be able to watch the legal arguments or hear the questions by the Justices. The people will not be able to see justice in action. The American public should be able to view the proceedings on TV much like they do with C-SPAN when Congress is in session.

I know cameras can be placed in a courtroom without disruption because I was one of the first judges in Texas to allow an unobtrusive camera in the courtroom. I did so without any problem and proved the cynics wrong.

A lack of seating capacity is no reason to deny the American public access to the Supreme Court. The American people deserve an all-access pass to watch the High Court in action. The Supreme Court is the most important court in the world. Let the world know what takes place behind those closed doors. Let cameras and the people in.

And that's just the way it is.

#### MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

(Ms. BUERKLE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BUERKLE. Mr. Speaker, the President assured American seniors that under his health care package, their insurance plans would not be affected and that they would have the same health care choices as before the law.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, this is not the case. The President's health care law